Daily Mains Practice Question 23-06-2026

GS-III- Science & Technology

Q1. Discuss the widening gap in AI adoption between the Global North and South. How does this divide impact India's competitiveness? (150 words) (10 marks)

IAS Parliament The Hindu

Introduction:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption is growing rapidly worldwide, but the Global North is adopting AI *nearly twice* as fast as the Global South (*Microsoft's Global AI Diffusion Q1 2026 Report*), creating a widening technological divide driven by disparities which directly impacts India's competitiveness.

Global AI Adoption Divide

• **Global North vs. South** – In 2025, AI usage in the Global North was 27.5%, compared to just 15.4% in the Global South, highlighting a structural imbalance in access to frontier models, electricity, internet connectivity, and digital skills.

• **Structural Gap** – Talent and ideas exist worldwide, but data centers, venture capital, and governance frameworks remain concentrated in advanced economies.

• **India's Position** – India ranks *64th globally* with 17.6% adoption, far behind leaders like the UAE (70.1%).

• Despite this, India is seen as a *benchmark for the Global South*, due to its strong digital public infrastructure (UPI, Aadhaar) and scalable innovation capacity.

• **India's Initiatives** – India AI Impact Summit and the New Delhi Declaration aim to democratize AI access and bridge the North-South divide.

Impact on India's Competitiveness

• **Low Global Ranking** – India's low ranking (64th) globally reflects limited access to frontier models, weak R&D investment, and dependence on foreign-owned platforms.

• **Talent Gap** – India produces AI users, not builders, weakening its ability to scale sovereign AI ecosystems.

• Over 90% of Indian employees use AI tools, there is an 82.9% shortage in advanced skills needed for building and deploying models.

• **Dependence on Foreign AI** – Reliance on imported models and platforms exposes India to sanctions, technology denial, and strategic vulnerabilities.

• **Restricted Access** – Export controls on advanced chips and frontier AI models can limit India's access to critical AI infrastructure.

• **Economic Risks** – Without a strong AI workforce, India risks losing competitiveness and facing significant losses in future services-sector revenues, that risking a $250–300 billion services revenue shortfall by 2035.

Measures India should take to build More AI Ecosystem Rather than just Consuming It.

• Implementing a coordinated National AI Talent Mission

• Raise R&D investment to match global averages.

• Build indigenous AI models and expand compute infrastructure.

• Strengthen talent ecosystems through curriculum reform and industry-linked training.

• Forge trusted partnerships to balance sovereignty with global integration.

Conclusion

To bridge this divide and preserve its global tech leadership, India must transition from a tool-literate workforce to a production-capable ecosystem, which helps India to secure its economic competitiveness and strategic autonomy in the global AI landscape.



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